

## Turkey's New Vision for "Man's Best Hope for Peace": United Nations Reform and Reorganization of the Security Council

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The UN...can never be anything but a mirror of the world as it is. It merely assembles together the multiplicity of individual national states with all their imperfections. If the states are bellicose, the UN will be full of bellicosity. If the world is a world of cold war, the UN will be a system of cold war (as in its first fifteen years)...If the world is beset with nationalism, so too must the UN be. If there are conflicts and disagreements among continents, races or ideologies, these will manifest in the UN as well. It is no use blaming the UN, therefore, for deficiencies, which are those of the world it reflects. The UN is as good or as bad as the states, which compose it.<sup>1</sup>

...that each nation develop its peculiar genius to the fullest extent, and in order to be able to do this, let each nation become a member of a World-State under the guidance of a Central Court of Justice. Dante, *De Monarchia*<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

*Despite its present reputation as weak, inefficient, and discreditable, the United Nations is one of humanity's most noble endeavors. Although the structure of the Security Council prevents its decision-making procedures from being more democratic, the UN still seeks to suppress aggression, respect self-determination, and promote human rights and well-being. Furthermore, political cosmopolitans' proposals for comprehensive UN reform, which goes far beyond increasing the number of permanent members of the Security Council, give us hope for substantial improvement. Nevertheless, the UN is still the sum of the states it is comprised of and UN reform depends on the broader and ambitious project of state reform as both concept and practice. Within this context, this paper argues that focusing exclusively on the Security Council and the geographical distribution of permanent membership only harms the comprehensiveness of the analyses seeking to reform the UN from a larger perspective. The fact that the success of a UN reform is closely related with the enhancement of member states' ethical capacities should also be taken into consideration.*

*The next round of debates for a proper solution to the UN impasse takes place in 2015, and Turkey is emerging as an enthusiastic voice for further reform and for its own potential permanent membership in the Security Council. However, Turkey has also developed a significantly anti-UN discourse unprecedented in its foreign policy, which now runs the risk of curtailing the country's capacity to partake in substantial change in UN decision-making procedures. Turkish*

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<sup>1</sup> Evan Luard, *United Nations* (London: Palgrave, 1994), 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Antony Adolf, *Peace: A World History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 110.

*Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu currently acts as a statesman, insisting on a statist reform (which focuses more on states' individual interests) of the Security Council. Interestingly, in the 1990s, when Davutoğlu was a university professor, his views of the UN tended to be more cosmopolitan and suggested a civilization-based solution. This paper, while elaborating on the discussions of reforming the UN from a cosmopolitan perspective, also probes Davutoğlu's conflicting approaches to the issue. It thus seeks to argue that Turkey, instead of pushing for a purely statist model, should consider supporting pluralistic, multi-level, and more-complex participation in the UN's decision-making procedures.*

**Keywords:** United Nations Reform, Security Council, Turkish Foreign Policy, Ahmet Davutoğlu

## 1. Introduction

It has been decades since the United Nations (UN) was sanctified as “man’s best hope for peace.”<sup>3</sup> The Cold War has since ended, but war continues, genocides have occurred, and famine and epidemics persist. The use of the veto right at the Security Council, which was supposed to be an exception, has become a common procedure, blocking resolutions that would have in fact healed the wounds of humanity. Only in 1995, on the occasion of the UN’s fiftieth anniversary, were the first comprehensive attempts of reform drafts made public. Despite its good intentions, the UN, which was founded to promote peace, security, equality, and collaboration at the global level, has been marginalized in decision-making processes in the international system because of its inefficacy. Currently, it hardly provides an appropriate ground for ensuring peoples of the world can pursue a high-quality life. Owing to particular deficiencies embedded in its structure, most proposals concerning its reform become dead letters. In this respect, despite unprecedented developments in the political, economic, and social spheres, the UN Charter has undergone few changes since its implementation in 1945. The general tendency among actors of the international system is to reject UN reform as too complicated. The UN, however, is too precious to be cast aside or neglected. It is not an exaggeration to call it one of the greatest enterprises of humanity in world history.

Within its traditional foreign policy, Turkey has always been respectful of the UN’s priorities, mission, and decision-making procedures. There have been, of course, gloomy episodes in the history of UN-Turkey relations, such as the Cyprus conflict and the Bosnian genocide. Even then, Ankara treasured its involvement with this most universal platform of peace negotiations. Turkey’s attitude towards the UN began to change in 2011, however, as the country’s attempts at passing resolutions at the Security Council to launch an intervention against the Assad regime have failed. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who is considered the architect of the foreign policy pursued in the past decade, places high importance on the UN and treats the Security Council as a means to underpin Turkish foreign-policy priorities. This paper argues that focusing on the Security Council and the geographical distribution of permanent membership harms the comprehensiveness of analyses seeking to reform the UN from a larger perspective. By this argument, the paper aims to delve into the political cosmopolitan view of UN reform, as it is the most encompassing one, and concentrate on Davutoğlu’s vision of the UN.

The next round of debates for proper resolution to the UN reform impasse occurs in 2015,

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Feder, *The United Nations: “Man’s Best Hope for Peace”?* (New York: American Book Company, 1968).

and Turkey is emerging as an enthusiastic voice for further reform and for its permanent membership on the Security Council. However, Turkey has developed a significantly anti-UN discourse unprecedented in its foreign policy, and this new approach now runs the risk of curtailing its capacity to partake in substantial changes in UN decision-making procedures. This paper thus seeks to argue that instead of pushing for a purely statist model and aiming at a veto right for itself, Turkey should consider supporting pluralistic, multi-level, and more-complex participation in the UN. The foremost reason why the UN model malfunctions today is the rigid, unchanging, reform-intolerant approaches produced by the states within; no substantial progress on world peace can be achieved without first enhancing states' ethical capacities.

## 2. Are We Ready to Discard the UN system?

The UN, whose members represent “more than 99 per cent of humanity,”<sup>4</sup> is the quintessential international organization to reflect global social, political, and economic conditions in their entirety. All topics that prevail on the agenda of the international system are among the concerns of the UN. For that reason, it has until now retained its realistic features and continued to exhibit “the geopolitical *status quo* in relation to the outmoded 1945 structures of authority.”<sup>5</sup> Particularly because the political order post-World War II was shaped, sustained, and promoted by states, the UN – alongside other international organizations – has become fundamentally statist. Therefore, even though its charter begins with the phrase “We the Peoples,”<sup>6</sup> the UN remains under the strict control of its member states. This statist character has become “the source of the greatest problems”<sup>7</sup> and has devalued initiatives dwelling on any feasible solution to these problems. The virtues embedded in the UN system thus need to be elaborated on so that those in favor of a world without the UN can reconsider their position.

Despite its present reputation as weak, inefficient, and discreditable, the UN is one of humanity's most noble endeavors. Among international organizations, the UN has adopted the most-inclusive and -impartial rhetoric, promising “to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors,” and intended to take actions accordingly. Its institutions were designed to prevent it from repeating the mistakes of its predecessor, the League of Nations. It encourages the centuries-old expectation that a new world order can be achieved through an appropriate institution.<sup>8</sup> It seeks to suppress aggression, respect self-determination, and promote human rights.<sup>9</sup> In doing so, it also aims to provide an international forum (the General Assembly) in which member states are equal, under the principle of “one state one vote,”<sup>10</sup> and thus to reach a consensus on solving international problems. There is no doubt that since the UN's 1945 inception in San Francisco, it has succeeded in introducing new principles of diplomatic behavior, such as the commitment of member states – though in varying degrees – to care for others, promote human rights, ensure the redistribution

<sup>4</sup> Richard Falk, *The End of the World Order: Essays on Normative International Relations* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1999), 123.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Charter of the United Nations,’ United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/preamble.shtml>.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Jones, *Pluralism, Justice and Equality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Mortimer N. S. Sellers, *The New World Order: Sovereignty, Human Rights and the Self-Determination of Peoples* (Oxford and Washington D.C.: Berg Publishing, 1996), 1.

<sup>10</sup> David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 88.

of wealth, and protect global goods. Areas of international cooperation have been thus accomplished within the UN system. More specifically, it has achieved considerable success in decolonization, peacekeeping operations, disease control, demographic control, disaster relief, nuclear disarmament, maritime regulations, managing world food production, and aiding the fall of communism. Through agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN has taken effective action on many global issues. In making this world a better and a more-equal and -just place, the UN and its agencies have overcome many major difficulties and initiated an unprecedented amount of "collaborative international conduct."<sup>11</sup>

Be this as it may, the UN has also become a great failure and disappointment in equally as many aspects. Since 1945, the world has undergone fundamental, and mostly unforeseen, changes. Consequent to the tightening and widening interdependence in economic, political, military, social, and environmental issues, the borders of nation-states have been eroding. Such interdependence requires the UN to generate and operate policies of genuine collaboration and cooperation, and its Charter and agencies have proven woefully inadequate numerous times in their dealings with the resulting social, economic, political, and security needs of states and peoples. The UN has fallen spectacularly short in maintaining world peace, as evident in Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, and recently Syria, mostly because "an effective global security system based on the Charter scheme"<sup>12</sup> has not been implemented by the Security Council. Although it was designed to strengthen the organization, the Security Council currently fails to create common grounds for common action.

The Security Council, which is the main decision-making body of the UN, as described in Article 23 of the Charter, has played a crucial role in preserving the "international power structure as it was understood in 1945."<sup>13</sup> For that reason, today it is nothing but a glaring anachronism. None of the great powers – economic, political, or demographic – that emerged after World War II is included in the UN's decision-making procedures. Making amendments in the Charter to allow the new prominent actors of global politics to have permanent seats at the Security Council requires a unanimous vote of the current five permanent members (P5), acting in concert with two-thirds of the General Assembly. Such a consensus, which is called virtual unanimity, has rarely been reached in UN history. During the Cold War, rather than have to amend the Charter, the United States (US) and Russia, both permanent members of the Security Council, used their influence to disable it.<sup>14</sup> The lack of "a consent of a reliable kind"<sup>15</sup> is most evident during the weeks of hesitation over humanitarian intervention.

More than once, the UN has fallen into the "intervention trap."<sup>16</sup> In fact, the incompatibility between the concepts of sovereignty and intervention within the Charter system sets this trap for the entire international community. Since 1945, the UN has rested on the principle of a sovereign nation state as defined by the Westphalian order, and accordingly, non-intervention in the domestic affairs of a member state has been the norm and intervention has remained an exception. Chapter 7 of the Charter regulates enforcement measures by the UN, including the

<sup>11</sup> Jones, *Pluralism*, 24.

<sup>12</sup> The Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 216.

<sup>13</sup> Held, *Global Order*, 87.

<sup>14</sup> The Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood*.

<sup>15</sup> Falk, *End of the World Order*, 118.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

use of force, all of which require unanimity at the Security Council. When masses of people were suppressed, undermined, and killed by their own states, as in Bosnia and Rwanda, the UN remained tragically ineffective; the Security Council could not reach a consensus owing to the “realist mind-set of leaders”<sup>17</sup> defending national sovereignty. As a result of the catastrophic outcomes of delayed or absent initiatives in humanitarian intervention, today the UN is almost completely cut out of international arrangements concerning conflict resolution.

Among the UN’s many other deficiencies, such as US hegemony and difficulties adhering to budgetary limits, its inability to act in cases of extensive human suffering is the main reason why the organization is perceived as outmoded, irrelevant, and unwieldy. However, still the most universal international organization in global politics, the UN does not deserve to be discarded unless it will be replaced by a perfect model. Fortunately, the number of people, groups, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who invest hope in this noble endeavor of humankind and envisage reform is significant. Furthermore, although the UN has not surmounted its difficulties concerning humanitarian intervention, this does not mean it has failed to “add a human dimension to international law and international relations.” Through its human touch, by emphasizing “accountability of all states for their respect – or lack of respect – for human rights,” and its “acceptance of the principle of criminal responsibility of individuals,” the UN has inspired some solid norms to increase quality of life.<sup>18</sup> In the words of eminent international lawyer Sir Hersch Lauterpacht, the provisions of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the UN Charter “were adopted, with deliberation and after prolonged discussion before and during the San Francisco Conference, as part of the philosophy of the new international system and as a most compelling lesson of the experience of the inadequacies and dangers of the old.”<sup>19</sup> Their future reform should therefore be handled with equal care and labor and even more dialogue and empathy.

### 3. Reforming the UN

During the UN’s fiftieth anniversary, reform was placed forcefully at the top of the global agenda. Calls for reform drew from Article 109, which underlines the necessity of “a General Conference of the Members of the UN for the purpose of reviewing the present charter.” Interestingly enough, Paragraph 3 of the same article utters that “if such a conference has not been held before the tenth annual session of the General Assembly... the proposal to call such a conference shall be placed on the agenda of that session of the General Assembly.”<sup>20</sup> Despite reform proposals such as the Jackson Report (1969), Gardner Report (1975), Bertrand Report (1985), and the Nordic UN Project (1991), the conference mentioned in the Charter was not held before 1995. Yet, if then-UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had not spoken out for reform at that time, those attempts would not have happened then either. Boutros-Ghali’s ‘An Agenda for Peace’ and ‘An Agenda for Development’ were followed in 1997 by his successor Kofi Annan’s ‘Renewing the UN: A Program for Reform.’ Subsequent to the efforts by the secretaries general, eminent political theory and law scholars such as Daniele Archibugi and David Held also tried their hands at reforming the Charter.

In his *Democracy and Global Order*, Held argues that UN reform ought to take place

<sup>17</sup> Falk, *The End of World Order*, 119.

<sup>18</sup> C. Flinterman and J. Gutter, “The United Nations and Human Rights: Achievements and Challenges,” *UNDP Paper No. 48* (2000), <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2000/papers/flinterman2000.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Hersch Lauterpacht, *International Law and Human Rights* (Hamden CT: Archon Books, 1950), 147.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Wendell C. Gordon, *The United Nations at the Crossroads of Reform* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 208.

beyond the state level, that is, within the framework of cosmopolitan democracy, which endorses a system of global and divided authorities governed by a “democratic public law entrenched within and across borders.”<sup>21</sup> By “divided authorities,” he means individuals, NGOs, regional organizations, and parliaments/assemblies at the local/regional level. Archibugi, too, without dismissing ways to recapacitate the state to support a better UN system, emphasizes the national and global roles to be played by non-state actors. To these scholars, the UN has the potential to provide a democratic platform to all members of the international community. If a new organization were to be founded, Archibugi holds that it would be the UN all over again:

It has to be an international actor with the legitimacy and the impartiality that can enable it to engage in states’ internal affairs, an actor with the authority to mediate among states and the scope to represent a point of reference for civil society. In other words: it has to be the United Nations.<sup>22</sup>

There will always be politicians, such as US Republican John McCain, who call for “a new international organization that can accept as members only countries with a democratic government, a kind of League of Democracies.”<sup>23</sup> Supporters of the UN should outnumber them, however, and continue working for global democracy under the one-roof module.

Because conflicts within states, among states, and between states and non-state actors never cease, UN reform is a pressing issue. Visions of that reform, however, widely vary according to the visionaries’ political ideology, culture, citizenship, and even religion. Scholars such as Archibugi and Held, for instance, represent the group that seeks a reform of the nation-state along with a reform of the UN. A reformed state is expected to provide the ethical framework in which human beings can maintain their individualities. Archibugi has even contemplated the possibility of “creating an Assembly of the Peoples of the United Nations, which would directly represent citizens rather than their governments.”<sup>24</sup> Statesmen, on the other hand, not dwelling on enhancing the moral capacity of states, mainly insist on reconsidering who can enjoy permanent membership to the Security Council. In fact, renovating the Security Council according to the new geopolitical realities is a common theme on the agenda of political cosmopolitans and realists alike.

In 2005, Annan launched another extensive debate of reform issues and programs and seventieth-anniversary goals were set for 2015. The proposal, known as ‘In Larger Freedom,’ foresaw the expansion of the Security Council up to 24 seats through two models: A and B. Model A encompasses “the creation of six new permanent seats with no veto power and three new two-year non-permanent seats.” Model B offers “a new category of eight four-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year non-permanent and non-renewable seat.”<sup>25</sup> Although these models are still on the bargaining table, a will cleansed of national prejudices and agendas to solve the conundrum of the Security Council is not present. If this momentum of reform is not fueled by fresh reassurances and new perspectives by 2015, another chance for global peace and prosperity will fade away.

<sup>21</sup> Held, *Global Order*, 227.

<sup>22</sup> Daniele Archibugi, Sveva Baldini, and Marco Donati, “The United Nations as an Agency of Global Democracy” in *Global Democracy Key Debates*, ed. Barry Holden (London: Routledge, 2000), 128.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Archibugi, “A League of Democracies or a Democratic United Nations,” *Harvard International Review* (September 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Archibugi, “The Reform of the UN and Cosmopolitan Democracy: A Critical Review,” *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no. 3 (1993): 301.

<sup>25</sup> Jakop Simonsen, “UN Reform Upon 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: The Great Bargain,” *Perceptions* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 4.

Since 2002, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu has almost singlehandedly implemented a foreign policy substantially divergent from the traditional, western-oriented one. He also harbors a vision of an ideal UN, but this vision has also changed over time. The earlier version, with its cosmopolitan convictions, is rooted in his idea for a new world order, developed while he was a university professor in Malaysia in the 1990s. His suggestion for civilization-based instead of state-based UN representation caught the attention of Richard Falk, a scholar preoccupied with UN reform as much as Archibugi and Held are. Davutoğlu's current approach to the UN, which emerged after he became foreign minister, demonstrates realist tendencies with a dominant statist discourse. As a matter of fact, when assessed within the context of Turkey's Syria policy, he has adopted a rather hostile attitude towards the UN, which is uncommon in traditional Turkish foreign policy. Here, I argue that reforming the UN by enhancing states' ethical potentials would avoid attacks that could result in diminishing the organization beyond recovery. Davutoğlu's current vision of the UN, discussed below, does not support such a possibility and contradicts his previous civilizational approach.

#### 4. Ahmet Davutoğlu's Vision of the UN

In his 'False Universalism and the Geopolitics of Exclusion,' Falk underlines that the end of Cold War unleashed an international system in which non-Western actors have been excluded despite their geopolitical significance. To him, "dominance of *statist* identity bound up with the role of the state in the modern world order system"<sup>26</sup> and "Western civilizational hegemony"<sup>27</sup> particularly perpetuate the exclusion of Islamic countries. Ahmet Davutoğlu's writings in this context deserve the attention of political cosmopolitans who are not indifferent to the grievances of the Muslim world. His emphasis on Muslims' distrust of the Western world and its institutions leads Falk to reconsider why the international community has lost its power as a "Neutral-Problem-solver."<sup>28</sup> Such distrust and exclusion could be eliminated if the nation-state domination in international organizations were mitigated by introducing a membership based on civilizational identity.<sup>29</sup> According to this vision, a just and inclusive world order could be created by including authentic civilizations together with their extended geographies into global decision-making procedures. Prior to having undertaken a party position, Davutoğlu's vision of a new international system included such political cosmopolitan elements in it.

The 2002 election victory of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (JDP; in Turkish, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or AKP) launched a new political process in which the country's institutions, political elite, policy-making procedures, and, of course, state *ethos* have undergone a significant change. In terms of foreign policy, Davutoğlu (long-time advisor to the government even before his foreign minister posting), through his best-selling book *Strategic Depth: Turkey's Place in the World*,<sup>30</sup> has guided the ongoing transformation by emphasizing Turkey's historical and geographical depth. Unlike his almost-cosmopolitan approach in the 1990s, Davutoğlu's new approach adopts an explicit realist tone, using Cold War terminology. And parallel to the acceleration of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the tone of

<sup>26</sup> Richard Falk, "False Universalism and the Geopolitics of Exclusion: The Case of Islam," *Third World Quarterly*, 18, no. 1 (1997), 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (Kuala Lumpur: Mahir Productions, 1994) and Falk, "False Universalism," 13.

<sup>30</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth: Turkey's Place in the World* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2000)

Davutoğlu's criticism of the UN has become less and less friendly as the Security Council continues to decline to militarily intervene against the Assad regime. He considers the failure of the UN to act on the Syrian civil war as a missed opportunity to reform the UN, or, more simply, to elevate Turkey to a permanent position on the Security Council. For the reasons mentioned above, the UN's reluctance to interfere in Syria has of course been disappointing (to put it mildly), as it was with Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia. Davutoğlu's frustration about the absence of "a single binding resolution on Syria where more than 30 thousand people have gone missing, more than 2 million people have been displaced and more than 500 thousand people have been refugees"<sup>31</sup> justifies the humanitarian diplomacy subsequently conducted by Turkey in the form of establishing refugee camps along its border with Syria. Asking, "So why do we need the UN?,"<sup>32</sup> however, diminishes UN reform to merely increasing the number of permanent members of the Security Council and limits its mission to humanitarian intervention.

The Arab Spring was the first substantial crisis to test Turkey's recently assumed role in the Middle East as a regional soft power, a role that Davutoğlu envisioned in *Strategic Depth*. Turkey's attitude towards Assad's presidency is particularly significant in this context. Davutoğlu has repeated on several occasions that the Syrian question is a "litmus test"<sup>33</sup> of the credibility of the current international community and international organizations. As true a statement as that is, Turkey's dealings with Syria serve as a litmus test of Davutoğlu's own vision. Turkey-Syria relations were almost non-existent till 1998, especially because of Syria's undercover support of the terrorist PKK, conflict over the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and of course the Hatay question (a dispute over the province of Hatay, currently part of Turkey). In a much broader context, the diplomatic impasse between the two neighbors was the result of Turkey's years of accumulated discontent with Syria over its facilitation of religious sectarianism, drug trafficking, smuggling, terrorism, and espionage. When Davutoğlu became foreign minister in 2009, in accordance with his strategy of 'zero problems with neighbors,' he enhanced a diplomatic operation to improve Turkey's relations with Syria.

The Turkish-Syrian High Level Strategic Cooperation Council first met in Aleppo, on October 13, 2009, when 50 agreements were signed in just one week, and next on December 23, 2009, this time at a ministerial level. According to the protocols signed, visa requirements were reciprocally lifted and cooperation in the areas of shipping, aviation, energy, transport, finance, tourism, education, communication, electricity, agriculture, health, industry, and other sectors was established. The main accords to govern these economic relations were the Prevention of Double Taxation and the Reciprocal Stimulus and Protection of Investments. Through these measures and previous steps of trade liberalization, a Turkey-Syria Free Trade Area was planned to emerge within 12 years.

When Turkey's opposition to the Assad regime, on the grounds of human-rights violations, became open in August 2011, the zero-problem policy had deteriorated. The process of multi-level, multi-track integration with Damascus was frozen and the new Turkish foreign policy had failed its first serious test. On October 30, 2012, Davutoğlu labeled any possibility of

<sup>31</sup> "Davutoğlu: International System About to Fail Syria Test," *TurkishNY.com*, September 25, 2012, <http://www.turkishny.com/english-news/5-english-news/101576-davutoglu-international-system-about-to-fail-syria-test>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "Davutoğlu Says Supporters of Syria Should be Isolated," *Today's Zaman*, July 6, 2012, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-285743-davutoglu-says-supporters-of-syria-should-be-isolated.html>.

dialogue with Syria as “futile.”<sup>34</sup> With no subsequent interaction between the two countries, the UN was the remaining platform from which Turkey could pursue its plan of overthrowing Assad. At the Arab League’s twenty-fourth Ordinary Summit in Doha, Davutoğlu campaigned for a UN seat to be granted to the Syrian opposition.<sup>35</sup> To Davutoğlu, then, the UN seems instrumental to his desire of a Syria without Assad on the one hand, but on the other still shelters the Cold War paradigm, which is the greatest impediment to Turkey’s emerging leadership in the new world order. In the meantime, Turkey’s ungrounded good reference for opposition leaders partaking in the Free Syrian Army has given the world the impression that Turkey’s foreign policy is being “Sunnified.”<sup>36</sup> As the Syrian crisis takes the form of a civil war between the Sunni opposition and Assad’s Shia regime, Davutoğlu’s vision has begun to demonstrate a certain particularism in favor of Sunni-ism.

As the Assad regime remains in power, Turkey has further extended its “overt and covert support for al-Qaeda affiliated groups”<sup>37</sup> and Davutoğlu has shifted his frustration from Damascus to the UN. The lack of common interest to the speech he delivered on August 30, 2012 at the Security Council on an international intervention in Syria and the fact that “[n]ot even all members are represented in this meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers”<sup>38</sup> increased his discontent significantly. To add fuel to the fire, the Security Council’s subsequent resolutions to intervene in Libya and Mali show that the UN is not against *every* intervention, but deliberately against intervention in Syria.<sup>39</sup> Davutoğlu had already expressed the possibility of excluding the UN from making decisions in the Syrian crisis by “other options and measures,”<sup>40</sup> envisaged in Turkey’s new foreign policy. On February 15, 2013, in a rather ominous tone, Davutoğlu told the international community “to be ready for newly drawn borders in the Middle East.”<sup>41</sup> The UN may deny the possibility that the borders in that region, including Syria’s (which were drawn by Sykes-Picot in 1916) may change, but Davutoğlu maintains that the Middle East will be reshaped and that Turkey will be the region’s pivotal actor.<sup>42</sup> For that reason, at the forty-ninth Munich Security Conference in 2013, he proposed to expand the Security Council from 5+1 (with Germany) to 5+3 by including Turkey and Saudi Arabia.<sup>43</sup>

Davutoğlu’s vision for a new world order foresees a cardinal role for Turkey regardless of its capabilities and resources. Underpinned by a claim of the authenticity of the Turkish

<sup>34</sup> “Turkey Rules Out Dialogue with Syria as Pointless,” *Today’s Zaman*, October 30, 2012, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-296584-turkey-rules-out-dialogue-with-syria-as-pointless.html>.

<sup>35</sup> “Davutoglu Calls for UN Seat to Syrian Opposition,” *Anadolu Agency*, March 26, 2013, <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/news/148353--davutoglu-called-for-un-seat-to-syrian-opposition>.

<sup>36</sup> Semih İdiz, “The ‘Sunnification’ of Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Al Monitor*, March 1, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/akp-sunni-foreign-policy-turkey-sectarianism.html>

<sup>37</sup> Semih İdiz, “Turkey’s Syria Policy in Shambles Over Support for Jihadists,” *Al-Monitor*, July 23, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/07/turkey-syria-policy-support-jihadists.html>.

<sup>38</sup> “Speech Delivered by Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey at the UN Security Council,” August 30, 2012, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-mr\\_-ahmet-davutoğlu\\_minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-un-security-council\\_30-august-2012\\_-new-york.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-mr_-ahmet-davutoğlu_minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-turkey-at-the-un-security-council_30-august-2012_-new-york.en.mfa).

<sup>39</sup> “Violence in Syria is Threat for Turkey” and “Davutoğlu Criticizes Different Stances by UN in Mali, Syrian Crises,” *Today’s Zaman*, February 3, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-306007-davutoglu-criticizes-different-stances-by-un-in-mali-syrian-crisis.html>.

<sup>40</sup> “Turkish Minister Says Violence in Syria is Threat for Turkey’s Internal Security,” *PBS News Hour*, September 26, 2012, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/world/july-dec12/turkey2\\_09-26.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/world/july-dec12/turkey2_09-26.html).

<sup>41</sup> “FM Calls for UN Resolution to Gain Humanitarian Access to Syria,” *Today’s Zaman*, February 15, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-307199-fm-calls-for-un-resolution-to-gain-humanitarian-access-to-syria.html>.

<sup>42</sup> “Davutoğlu Vows to Restore Historic Ties With Mideast,” *Dünya*, July 27, 2012, <http://www.dunya.com/davutoglu-vows-to-restore-historic-ties-with-mideast-160940.htm>.

<sup>43</sup> “FM Calls for UN Resolution.”

civilization, this vision assigns Turkey the critical mission that the P5 has failed to fulfill, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Western civilization, therefore, has had its chance to design a new world order, but has led the international system to an impasse:

[W]e have to be aware that the Eurocentric culture reached the limits. Now there is a rise of authentic cultures, of old traditions. We have to admit them, we have to create a cultural inclusiveness. Otherwise global cultural order could not be restored...There is a need for a new paradigm of cultural inclusivity and interaction of authentic cultures and modernity.<sup>44</sup>

Within this context, Turkey, not long after its non-permanent membership appointment to the Security Council in 2009 and 2010, once again announced its candidacy for another round of temporary membership in 2015 and 2016. The press release concerning the subject emphasizes Turkey's "constructive, pro-active and reconciliation-oriented posture in the UN."<sup>45</sup> Through frequent non-permanent membership, Davutoğlu thus seeks permanent influence on the UN's decision-making procedures.

Another major disappointment for Davutoğlu with the UN system was the 2010 Mavi Marmara flotilla incident. As retaliation to Israel's attack on the ships, which were carrying Turkish activists and humanitarian aid to Gaza, he insisted that the Security Council issue a presidential statement condemning Israel "in the strongest terms."<sup>46</sup> The statement that was sent out urged "a prompt, independent, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards,"<sup>47</sup> considerably less-forceful language than Davutoğlu had wanted. Unable to influence decision-making procedures in the UN, Turkey experienced a moment of truth, which displayed how Davutoğlu's vision did not yet represent actuality. When its temporary membership to the Security Council proved inadequate to effect its desired change, Turkey subsequently applied for the 2015-2016 term. And now, because Davutoğlu's requests for an intervention in Syria have been declined, he feels Turkey's presence at the Security Council is increasingly important.

Despite his earlier advocacy for a broader vision of UN reform, Davutoğlu has begun to perceive the UN only as a tool for intervening in conflict within neighboring states. Although he once received the recognition of cosmopolitan scholars preoccupied with writing a new UN Charter, his current anti-UN discourse offers no solution to the lack of universality in global politics. His insistence on Turkey's permanent membership in the Security Council and the arguments that he provides in favor of it imply that no substantial improvement in the world order can be achieved without that development. His utterance of a "united humanitarian conscience under the flag of the United Nations"<sup>48</sup> and efforts to organize a summit of least-developed countries remain rather trivial in face of the particularism that he calls for. Amin Maalouf's *Le déreglement du monde (Disordered World)* argues that only a fresh start, focusing on universality alone, can save our civilization, which is lethally endangered by partiality.<sup>49</sup> In this respect, Turkey too should be able to partake in re-creating universality rather than creating yet more partiality in the international community.

<sup>44</sup> "Speech Delivered by H. E. Ahmet Davutoğlu Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in the University of London School of Economics and Political Science," March 7, 2013, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h\\_e\\_-ahmet-davutoglu\\_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey\\_-in-the-university-of-london-school-of-economics.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-h_e_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_-in-the-university-of-london-school-of-economics.en.mfa).

<sup>45</sup> "Press Release," May 18, 2011, <http://www.un.int/turkey/Announcement.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> "UN Security Council Members Demand Israel End Blockade," *Huffington Post*, June 1, 2010, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/01/un-security-council-israel-blockade\\_n\\_595610.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/01/un-security-council-israel-blockade_n_595610.html).

<sup>47</sup> "UN Security Council Members."

<sup>48</sup> "FM Calls for UN Resolution."

<sup>49</sup> Amin Maalouf, *Le Déreglement du Monde*, (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2009).

## 5. Conclusion

Of all its deficiencies, states' unwillingness to subordinate their national interests to the global good has most weakened the UN. The imperfections and partiality embedded in the modern state system have been brought into the UN system. Member states have used every means possible to pursue power politics and national interests in the international system. In the end, although its Charter was proclaimed in the name of the world's peoples, UN policies have failed to represent the general will of 'us.' The UN has been abused, disabled, and sometimes bypassed by 'them' – the member states.

From the political cosmopolitan point of view, the UN is the most appropriate institution to operate as a global government because it is the most suitable and the only global platform from which to promote a universal set of norms and values. In this view, a new organization must be built "on the foundations – not the ashes – of the former, keeping the name but changing many of its standard operating procedures and guiding concepts."<sup>50</sup> The new UN ought to go beyond realism and provide a solution to the democratic deficit undermining individuals' right to self-determination. Within the new system, the principle of autonomy would be divorced from the idea of being a member of a particular kind of state or nation. For political cosmopolitans, then, UN reform is not simply about whether more states ought to be brought into the permanent Security Council, but about questioning the intrinsic value of the state, and whether the UN, an imperfectly constructed entity, can reform itself.

A global government evidently remains a Utopian dream of political cosmopolitans. Before aiming at making the UN such an institution, however, the international community should reach a consensus to better the UN's decision-making procedures. Within this framework, states need to first engage in internal self-analysis and evolve to provide citizens with the necessary self-determination and empowerment.<sup>51</sup> As the UN places value on the individual, it will become more pluralist and inclusive. Davutoğlu's vision of the UN, however, will not reflect such an understanding as long as his emphasis simply rests on permanent membership to the Security Council to be able to pursue the JDP's foreign-policy priorities. Furthermore, his persistent and non-constructive criticism may in the end harm the rare but precious initiatives of substantial UN reform. Democratization and perfect inclusiveness in the UN depend on member states' own harmony, effective legislation, and commitment to their citizens' well-being as much as humanity's. It is important to remember that the UN is only the sum of its states.

The Turkish public has historically viewed the UN as an appropriate platform from which to stay involved with groundbreaking global changes, and Turkey's participation in UN missions has always been supported as a part of its "greater involvement in international politics." For example, after the end of the Cold War, Ankara, witnessing the emergence of a new world order, joined the "efforts to bring peace and stability to the Horn of Africa" in 1992 by contributing troops to the mission in Somalia (which was overseen by a Turkish general).<sup>52</sup> Such demonstration of Turkey's commitment to internationalism under the UN has been followed by its participation in disaster relief, humanitarian aid, and peace missions

<sup>50</sup> Georgios Kostakos, "UN Reform: The Post-Cold War World Organization" in *The United Nations in the New World Order: The World Organization at Fifty*, eds. Dimitris Bourantonis and Jarrod Wiener (London: MacMillan Press, 1995), 64.

<sup>51</sup> Hilary Charlesworth, "Feminist Methods in International Law," *American Journal of International Law* 93, no. 2 (1998): 379.

<sup>52</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, "New Patterns of Turkish Foreign Policy Behavior," in *Turkey: Political, Social and Economic Challenges in the 1990s*, eds. Çiğdem Balım et al. (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1995), 3.

to the Ivory Coast, Haiti, Kosovo, and East Timor. The International Labour Organization (another UN agency), UNESCO, and UNICEF have exerted tangible impacts on Turkish socio-economic and cultural policies in terms of the statistics, reports, and surveys they conduct. Gender equality, mother-child health, water, sanitation and hygiene, workplace safety, and world heritage sites are a few of the many issue areas that require and benefit from seriously committed, uninterrupted cooperation with the UN. Grounded in the conviction that “social peace is as important as strategic or political peace,” the UN acknowledges its obligation to end “discrimination and exclusion” by developing and providing “technical assistance” for “the transformation of deficient national structures and capabilities.”<sup>53</sup> Turkey too appreciates the power and aptness of this kind of support.

Recently, however, statements by Turkish officials, including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, reflect widespread anti-UN sentiments among the JDP government. Erdoğan’s suggestion of establishing an alternative UN is significant in that sense. The following statement demonstrates how much the Turkish government associates the UN, an overarching and multi-dimensional structure, solely with the Security Council and its intervention capacity: “If we are really saying that the world is bigger than ‘the five’ then with other countries coming out, they would form their own United Nations.”<sup>54</sup> Mehmet Görmez, President of the Directorate General for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*), was so enraged about the UN unwillingness to intervene in Syria that he rejected UN money for stopping violence against women in Turkey. This decision can only be seen as another example of anti-UN sentiments. According to a 2011 UN report, in Turkey, “39 percent of women...had suffered physical violence at some time in their lives,”<sup>55</sup> and the number increases daily. A public vow not to spend “a single penny of the UN’s money”<sup>56</sup> on an issue as serious as violence against women not only harms the Turkish public’s perceptions of the UN, but also the cause itself.

The UN’s history of safeguarding human security, especially its efforts of protecting individuals from state violence, is not impressive. Nevertheless, because of its size, scope, discourse, and commitment, the UN still appears to be humanity’s best hope for global, political, and social peace. The fact that current Turkish foreign policy displays the most hostile attitude in its history towards this international organization should worry those who believe in the UN’s authority and reform potential, as well as in the role that Turkey could play in sustaining global peace and bettering the world order. Davutoğlu’s attempts to initiate efforts to discard the UN altogether and his attempts to use the Security Council as a platform from which to pursue Turkey’s Middle East policies may have profound implications not only for Turkish citizens, but also for the rest of the world.

<sup>53</sup> “An Agenda for Peace-A/47/277S/24111,” *UN Documents: Gathering a Body of Global Agreements*, June 17, 1992, <http://www.un-documents.net/a47-277.htm>.

<sup>54</sup> “Turkey Has No Plans for Alternative UN, Despite PM’s Statement,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, August 23, 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-erdogan-floats-the-idea-of-alternative-un.aspx?pageID=238&nID=53086&NewsCatID=338>.

<sup>55</sup> Melis Figanmeşe, “Working to End Violence Against Women in Turkey,” *Huffington Post*, May 15, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/melis-figanmese/working-to-end-violence\\_b\\_3279717.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/melis-figanmese/working-to-end-violence_b_3279717.html).

<sup>56</sup> “Turkey’s Religious Head Refuses UN Fund for Violence Against Women Project,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, August 22, 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-religious-head-refuses-un-fund-for-violence-against-women-project.aspx?pageID=238&nID=53062&NewsCatID=341>.

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